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ABSTRACT

This report presents conclusions of a study of the feasibility of adapting Open University materials for use in student-centered learning in other institutions, especially polytechnics. It discusses the development of open learning in the polytechnics, drawing attention to the need for collaborative production of materials. Chapter 1 is an introduction. Chapter 2 discusses the advantages and problems associated with open learning. Chapter 3 explains why Open University material is particularly suitable for adaptation and argues the case for adaptation as opposed to unchanged adoption or writing new material. Chapter 4 demonstrates, through an estimate of likely demand, that adaptation is a viable proposition. An adaptation procedure agreed upon with the Open University is presented in Chapter 5. It discusses problems of copyright, royalties, and updating along with other issues. Chapter 6 makes proposals for printing and publishing the adaptations. The report concludes that the approach proposed represents a potentially major educational initiative that could have a considerable impact on teaching and learning in higher education. It recommends that the initiative be encouraged at the national level through pump-priming funding to establish the first series of adaptations. (YLB)

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The feasibility of adapting Open University materials for use in Polytechnics and similar institutions

ED201919

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A CNAA Development Services Project Paper

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This project paper summarises the work of a project supported by CNAA's Development Fund. It was conducted at Huddersfield Polytechnic by Barry Lee and John Bibby.

In addition to this final report of the project, three Working Papers are available free of charge from CNAA Development Services. These are:
Working Paper 1 : Summary of Operation of Project
Working Paper 2 : Workshop Report
Working Paper 3 : Adapting Open University Material: An Appraisal.

The views expressed in this project paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the CNAA.

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"Open learning is not genuinely open if institutions operate it in isolation. Distance learning techniques lend themselves ideally in co-operation.... The Open University must be at the heart of the co-operation among institutions. No higher education institution in this country need spend time and energy re-inventing the wheel. A huge range of experience is available and the Open University is ready and able to help any institution adapt it for its own."

Baroness Carnegy of Lour
House of Lords, 17.12.85

Summary of Report

This report presents conclusions obtained by the Huddersfield OU/Poly Project over the period January to June 1986. This phase of the project was funded by the CNAA Development Fund and administered by Huddersfield Polytechnic. It was concerned with investigating the feasibity of adapting Open University materials for use in student-centred learning in other institutions, especially polytechnics.

The investigation involved extensive discussions with senior OU staff, a continuing dialogue with Polytechnic lecturers who are also OU part-time tutors, a weekend workshop which tackled the academic and logistical issues of adaptation, and a commissioned market survey of the demand for adapted OU materials.

The report discusses the development of open learning in the Polytechnics, drawing attention to the need for collaborative production of materials, and explains why OU material is particularly suitable for adaptation; it argues the case for adaptation as opposed to unchanged adoption or writing new material; it demonstrates through an estimate of likely demand that adaptation is a viable proposition; it presents an adaptation procedure agreed with the OU; and proposes viable methods of working and collaboration; it discusses problems of copyright, royalties and updating along with other issues; and it makes proposals for printing and publishing the adaptations.

The report concludes that the approach proposed here represents a potentially major educational initiative which could have a considerable impact on teaching and learning in higher education; it recommends that the initiative should be encouraged at national level through pump-priming funding to establish the first series of adaptations.

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Preface and Acknowledgements

This is a report on the feasibility of adapting Open University materials for use in Polytechnics and similar institutions. The study was funded by the CNAA Development Fund and was largely carried out between January and June 1986. The study involved extensive discussions with senior staff at the Open University, a continuing dialogue with Polytechnic staff who act as Open University part-time tutors, a weekend workshop which addressed the academic and logistic issues involved in adaptation, and a specially commissioned market survey of the demand for adapted Open University materials.

This report discusses the issues involved, concludes that adaptation of OU material is both desirable and feasible, and makes recommendations for further work. In addition to this report, several project working papers are available from the CNAA Development Services Unit (see Section 1.3).

Although the project refers to Open University/Polytechnic collaboration in its title, we wish to make clear at the outset our view that many, if not all, institutions of higher learning - including universities - could benefit from increased use of Open University material. Indeed, this project has received enthusiastic support from staff in colleges of higher education and from Scottish central institutions. Thus "Polytechnic" in this report is best seen as shorthand for "Polytechnics and similar institutions".

Like all grass-roots projects, the OU/Poly Project would not have got off the ground without support from persons far too numerous to mention individually. However, we should especially like to thank the following Open University personnel: Joe Clinch (Secretary), Professor Norman Gowar (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Greville Rumble (Planning Officer), Wynne Brindle (Copyrights Manager), Professor Dick Housden (Dean of Mathematics), David Asch (Open Business School), Professor Ron Glatter (School of Educational Studies), Stacey Pandit (Statistics Officer), and staff at the Open University Edinburgh Regional office. In addition, we must thank Geoff Fielding of Napier College, Nigel Nixon and Jeffrey Weeks of the CNAA, and Professor Malcolm Burnip of Huddersfield Polytechnic for their advice and support; Mrs Dorethea Tarbatt and Mrs Margaret MacDougall for secretarial assistance; and Mr Brian McDougall of SBC Economic and Marketing Consultants for his report, parts of which have been incorporated in Chapters 4 and 6. Finally, we should like to thank participants at the York Workshop and other Polytechnic Lecturers and Open University part-time tutors: without their support, this project would not have been possible. The usual disclaimers are in order, and we would welcome readers' comments on the report; these should be sent to the Registrar of Development Services at the CNAA.

John Bibby

Barry Lee

Definition of terms

(This attempt to define some of the terms used in the report takes as its starting point some of the definitions given in the CNAA Committee for Academic Policy Publication 1a/33.)

In *open learning* students are assisted to learn at their own pace, at times and locations convenient to them, and with means within the learning process of determining whether the material studied has been understood. Open learning is intended to provide an opportunity for students to exercise a greater degree of control over their programmes of study than is normally provided by traditional teaching modes.

Open learning implies some degree of *open access* whereby students can learn in more flexible ways; this removes the requirement for physical presence at prescribed times, is based on the possibility of credit accumulation at different institutions, and allows students to extend their studies over longer periods of time. There are of course degrees of "open-ness"; the more the constraints on the student, the less open is the course.

If students can study at locations remote from the institution with which they are registered, then this is called *distance learning*; the assumption is that material is available in text, video, audio or computer-based form for study at a distance; this material has to be prepared in advance and is costly to prepare, and so it makes sense to think of adopting or adapting material which has already been developed elsewhere.

Increasing emphasis is being placed on *individualised instruction* in all areas of education. This is based on the view that students' needs are diverse, so they can only effectively learn if free to follow individualised programmes of study. This implies that course material must be available in a form appropriate for each individual.

It is acknowledged that open learning requires *tutorial support* so that students can come together with other students and staff; this facilitates both the involvement of students as members of an academic community and also the development of competences which can only be promoted through group discussion and problem solving.

Another name for this learning process is *resource-based learning* which envisages a learner-centred curriculum in which the student utilises and exploits a range of learning resources, including machines, materials and academics.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The starting-point of this project may be described by a series of statements. Some of these can be accepted without question, while others require interrogation. They are as follows:

1a. There is a need for good quality Open Learning materials in Polytechnics.

1b. These materials can with advantage be produced by several Polytechnics jointly.

1c. The CNAA is ideally placed to encourage this sound educational initiative.

2a. The need for Open Learning materials is greater in some subjects than in others.

2b. The Open University has already prepared Open Learning materials in a wide range of subjects, including several of those where Polytechnic needs are greatest.

2c. However, OU materials are not always immediately usable for Open Learning in Polytechnics; adaptation is required.

3. In certain specified subject areas, adaptation is feasible because:

- the OU is willing for it to proceed
- suitable OU materials exist
- suitable persons are available to perform the adaptation (especially Polytechnic staff who are also OU part-time tutors)
- estimates of likely demand are suitably high.

4. Nevertheless, it is important that this initiative proceeds according to some structured plan, because otherwise

- it may be unduly costly
- the OU may weaken its support
- publication, negotiation of copyright, etc. would be unduly onerous for individual subject groups

and in any case, the existence of subject working groups has considerable potential 'spin-off' in developing sound teaching strategies.

1.2. Objectives of the Report

Using the above overview, the objectives of the project may be summarised as follows:

1. To examine and report on the issues set out above, especially any which may be problematic.

2. To investigate and make recommendations concerning the following specific questions:

    a. What is the level of demand for Open Learning materials? (item 1a)

    b. How is effective liaison between institutions best ensured? (1b)

    c. What sources of funding are available? (1c)

    d. In which subject areas is the need for Open Learning materials most acute? Does suitable OU material exist in these areas? (2a, 2b)

    e. What extent of adaptation is required? (2c)

    f. Will the OU allow and encourage adaptations? (3)

    g. Are there copyright problems? (3)

    h. How is adaptation best carried out? (3)

    i. What organisational structure is best for arranging the adaptation? (4)

    j. How should materials be prepared and disseminated? (4)

1.3. Structure of the Report

The structure of this report is as follows:

- Chapter 2 discusses key issues related to open learning and the use of OU materials in Polytechnics.

- Chapter 3 argues the case for adapting OU materials in comparison with alternative ways of using them and other ways of acquiring open learning material.

- Chapter 4 provides an estimate of likely demand for adapted OU material, to see whether adaptation is a viable proposition.

- Chapter 5 describes the adaptation procedure agreed with the Open University and a method of working, and discusses issues of copyright and royalties.

- Chapter 6 discusses the situation regarding printing and publishing the adapted material.

- Chapter 7 presents overall recommendations and conclusions.

In addition, the following Project Working Papers are available from CNAA Development Services Division:

1. Summary of Operation of the OU/Poly Project
2. Report on Weekend Workshop, March 1986
3. Report of SBC Economic and Marketing Consultants.

Throughout the report, recommendations appear in bold print. The major recommendations are collected together in Chapter 7, where we also present our final conclusions.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

ASLIP	Association of Statistics Lecturers in Polytechnics
CE	Continuing Education
CMA	Computer Marked Assignment
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards
ECCTIS	Educational Counselling and Credit Transfer Information Service
HED	Handling Experimental Data (S101)
OL	Open Learning
OU	Open University
OUEE	Open University Educational Enterprises
SBC	SBC Economic and Marketing Consultants
TMA	Tutor Marked Assignment

CHAPTER 2

OPEN LEARNING, THE OPEN UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNICS

2.1. Summary of chapter

This chapter discusses the advantages and problems associated with Open Learning. This provides a context for describing ways in which Open University materials can be and are being used in Polytechnics, including their use in credit transfer, in developing subject teacher networks, and in other ways.

2.2. Why use Open Learning?

It is not the function of this report to argue at length the merits of Open Learning, but to note several key features of this approach, and identify advantages and problem areas. Most Open Learning systems have some or all of the following features:

- non-lecture teaching (written texts, computer assisted instruction, audio-visual materials, etc.)
- rapid feedback self-assessment material
- use of teaching staff for tutorial rather than lecturing functions
- emphasis on the students deciding their own study patterns.

Among the advantages of effective Open Learning systems are the following:

- students proceed at their own pace
- students have greater diversity of teaching material, and are more motivated
- students can test themselves, and receive immediate feedback on how they are progressing
- the time of students and lecturers is more effectively used.

Problems associated with Open Learning systems include the following:

- heavy "up front" investment is needed to produce teaching material
- Open Learning requires a different system of organization, to which teachers as well as students must adapt
- teachers (not students!) suffer from "lecture deprivation".

The authors, along with others in Polytechnics and elsewhere, are convinced of the merits of Open Learning in a wide variety of situations, and we believe that the CNAA should be seen to encourage sound Open Learning initiatives throughout its areas of responsibility. It may well be that as a standard part of CNAA's procedure for course approval, course teams should be invited to indicate their policy towards Open Learning in general, and towards the use of adapted or unadapted Open University material in particular. If Open Learning is felt to be inappropriate, then this view should be justified.

In the context of the present report, two other features are especially relevant:

1. the existence of good quality, tried-and-tested Open Learning material from the Open University, in a range of subject areas including many taught in Polytechnics

2. on-going pressure to reduce lecture loads in Polytechnics, for personnel, economic, and pedagogic reasons.

Since 1970, Open University academics have been preparing learning materials within six faculties and schools:

- Social sciences (prefix D)

- Education (E)

- Mathematics (M)

- Arts (A)

- Science (S)

- Technology (T)

Most (but not all) OU textual and audio materials are marketed by Open University Educational Enterprises (OUEE), a wholly owned subsidiary of the OU. In addition, the Continuing Education area produces materials which are marketed separately from OUEE, and there are 'U' courses which for our purposes may be regarded as emanating from *ad hoc* groupings of faculties.

The Open University has been an important innovator in distance education, and OU texts are recognised world-wide as being of first-class quality. Although the public spotlight is often thrown upon the television "shop window" of the OU, it is actually the written texts that consume most production time, and surveys show that it is these texts which students find most useful in their learning.

The OU's six faculties cover many, though not all, of the subject areas taught in Polytechnics. Notable exceptions are applied courses such as branches of engineering, professional courses (law, accountancy), and foreign languages. However, even in these subject areas, relevant OU courses do exist - quantitative methods, history of literature, basic science, etc.

2.3. Open University materials and Polytechnic teaching

2.3.1. The extent of current OU influence in Polytechnics

OU materials already permeate Polytechnic teaching in various ways. The quantitative extent of this penetration could be estimated only after a systematic survey, and we have not seen it as part of our task to provide such estimates. However, it does appear that, at least in the subject areas with which we have contact:

- at least one Polytechnic teacher in ten has had some formal contact with the Open University, whether as student, part-time tutor, or summer school tutor;

- for every Polytechnic teacher who has had *formal* contact with the OU, at least four have some familiarity with OU materials in their subject area.

Table 2.1 indicates that almost 1000 Polytechnic staff are currently employed by the OU on a part-time basis. Moreover, it is clear from casual observation that most Polytechnic teachers who come into contact with OU material, whether at a formal or informal level, are prepared to allow that it influences the form or content of their teaching.

The above suggests that *up to around one half of existing Polytechnic lecturers have allowed The Open University to influence their teaching in one way or another.* Even allowing for errors in our numerical estimates, the existing influence of The Open University on Polytechnic teaching is considerable. If this influence can be developed and structured in conscious and systematic ways, the corresponding potential for influencing future educational developments in Polytechnics could be enormous.

Table 2.1. Employer of part-time OU tutorial staff, by Faculty (Source: Open University records, 1986).

	OU Faculty							
Employer	Arts	Soc Sci	Educ	Maths	Science	Tech	Other	Total
University	142	197	62	169	290	173	85	1118
Polytechnic	122	196	52	144	174	213	91	992
Coll. of Ed.	90	69	68	57	49	40	35	408
Other Ed.	243	131	126	154	209	115	60	1038
Other	434	266	67	181	306	206	193	1653
Total	1031	859	375	705	1028	747	464	5209

2.3.2. Ways of using OU materials

Methods of using OU materials vary from subject to subject, from institution to institution, and from lecturer to lecturer. We have noted the following modes of use (ordered in roughly increasing degree of influence of the OU material upon the course):

1. Informal background reading by lecturer

2. Inclusion of OU approaches or ways of dealing with the subject matter; this may be:

    a. implicit - not always explicitly recognised even by the lecturer;

    b. explicit - recognised by the lecturer to him/herself and

to colleagues;

c. explicit - acknowledged by the lecturer to the students.

3. Explicit referenced inclusion of specific sections of OU material in the course.

4. Explicit encouragement or requirement that students should read sections of OU text or watch OU videos

   a. as a small part of the Polytechnic course

   b. as a large part of the Polytechnic course

   c. as the whole Polytechnic course.

The usage of these modes varies. We are unaware of any Polytechnic course in which mode 4c has been adopted, although one attempt to do so (at Huddersfield Polytechnic) foundered on the grounds of copyright and the cost of bulk purchasing from the OU. **Use of mode 4c would be made easier by greater availability of bulk discounts or photocopying licences from the OU.** Mode 4b is also rather seldom found. However, 4a is relatively common, especially in the social sciences. Modes 3, 2 and 1 occur more frequently. The reasons for this are that mode 1

- meshes most easily with traditional attitudes concerning the lecturer's teaching role (distiller/transmitter of wisdom; autonomous pedagogue, etc.)

- requires least "up front" investment and organisation, (photocopying, organising of video-recorders, etc.)

- provokes fewest anxieties concerning plagiarism/infringement of copyright, etc..

The fact that mode 1 is the dominant method of usage probably indicates a shrewd and realistic assessment by Polytechnic lecturers of the possibilities and restrictions provided by current college environments. Although certain individuals may be more audacious in what they attempt (e.g. using modes 4a-c above), it would not be sensible to expect a big shift in this direction under present conditions. However, *these conditions can be changed*, and the CNAA among other bodies can influence the way in which college environments change.

2.4. Open Learning in Polytechnics

There are many Open Learning developments in Polytechnics, which cannot be summarised here. Suffice it to say that we suspect a considerable amount of re-inventing the wheel. The Open Tech has been no exception to this, and the fear of copyright infringement may limit the extent to which Polytechnic lecturers have been able to learn from and exploit the experience of others. This is especially so with OU material, which is seen as emanating from a "different" institution - distant, well-funded, university-academic, and often largely irrelevant as far as Polytechnic students are concerned. There certainly are differences; but there are also important similarities, and we believe that *all* **open learning projects should familiarise**

themselves with OU methods and materials, even if in the end they decide to do things in differently.

2.5. Advantages of collaboration between Polytechnics in Open Learning developments

The "up front" investment required for Open Learning includes infrastructural organisation (provision of workshops, library space, background documents, etc.), as well as the preparation of learning materials. The costs of these can be formidable:

1. By March 1987, the Open Tech Programme will have spent over £45 million in developing some 30,000 study hours of training materials. On a crude averaging basis, this works out at £1,500 per study hour. (David Tinsley, Director of the Open Tech, in *Flexible Learning: Developments and Implications in Training*, Keynote address at Educational Technology International Conference (ETIC 86), Edinburgh, April 1986).

2. Production of course units at the Open University works out at some 1-2 units per OU academic per year. Taking a unit as 12 student study hours, and the cost of an OU academic as £20,000 per year (including accommodation and other ancillary costs), this gives an average cost of between £950 and £1900 per study hour.

(The Open University, in commenting upon the Draft Report, preferred to put the range much wider - "from £200 to £11000 or more". However, this upper end presumably relates to highly a-typical learning periods, such as television. Moreover, a cost-comparison carried out in the early days of the OU put the overhead costs at what would today be from £800 to £2100 per study hour (full-credit OU courses only: see *Higher Education 3* (1974), pp.439-468). Thus it appears that the figure of £2000 per study hour has the right order of magnitude.

By contrast with these figures, the average cost of Polytechnic lectures is under £40 per hour (reckoning 600 teaching hours for an annual salary including overheads of £23,000).

However, the crucial "missing factor" in these calculations is the number of students taught: whereas the average Polytechnic class may be around 30, good open learning material can reach thousands of students over a period of years. (Some OU courses, though far from all of them, are used by 40,000 students over an eight-year period.) Thus, on these figures, the average cost per student study hour could be, very approximately,

- up to £2 in Polytechnics

- as low as 25p in the Open University.

These calculations claim no great accuracy or completeness. In particular, they exclude non-academic costs, which may be higher at the OU than in Polytechnics. More detailed calculations may change the precise costings derived, but are unlikely to change the qualitative conclusion, namely that OU costs per student study hour can be considerably cheaper than those in Polytechnics. Several readers of the Draft Report pointed out that even if Open Learning was *not* cheaper, it would still be desirable because it provides a substantially better educational experience.

The estimates presented here accord with comparisons made some years ago, which

concluded that resource costs per OU undergraduate are approximately one-sixth of costs elsewhere, and that the average full-time-equivalent student cost was about one-half that of conventional universities - see Leslie Wagner, "The economics of The Open University", *Higher Education 1*, (1972), pp.159-183).

The above calculations are approximate in the extreme, and are provided in order to underline three main points:

1. Open Learning can be expensive, *especially in the early stages*.

2. The major economic advantage of OL comes from economies of scale; in other words, *Open Learning is most effective in high population courses*.

3. Where opportunities exist for adapting *existing* open learning material, such as that provided by the OU, this can considerably reduce the "up front" production costs.

When OL material can be used in several institutions, the scope for economies of scale is greatest. A further advantage in developing material for use in several institutions is the scope that this provides for comparative monitoring. By comparing the effectiveness of a given set of OL materials within a range of different environments, a quasi-experimental situation can be approximated. This is an opportunity which should be exploited.

In supporting Open Learning developments, we recommend that especial attention should be given to high population courses, curricula which are taught in several institutions, and collaborative developments between institutions.

2.6. Developing inter-institutional links and subject teacher networks

The last section stressed the *economic* advantages of collaboration between institutions.

There are also sound *educational* reasons for encouraging such links, in the form of loose liaisons in which teaching issues having a prime place on the agenda. These links most naturally arise in the form of subject teacher networks, with the active involvement of junior teaching personnel. We believe that subject teacher networks should be accorded an important status in curriculum planning, and serious discussion of teaching initiatives at an inter-institutional level need to be matched by similar discussions and action within participating departments.

The detailed agenda of subject teacher networks must be decided by the participants, but high priority should be given to the development of Open Learning Initiatives. Part of the general philosophy of subject teacher networks and inter-institutional collaboration is that *teaching practices improve if discussed with others*. In the area of open learning, the experience of The Open University is perhaps the most developed and the most systematically documented initiative. **Therefore each subject teacher network could appropriately include as part of its agenda the consideration of all Open University materials (past and present) produced in its particular field, from the viewpoint of:**

- **the scope of OU material in that subject area**

- **its strengths and weaknesses from the point of view of the new constituency of students**

- **parts of the OU material which could be used in polytechnic teaching, with or without adaptation**

- **how any adaptation of OU material should proceed.**

It would be of great value if the CNAA were to encourage and support subject teacher networks to discuss the above matters.

Some first steps towards establishing subject networks were taken at the project's York Workshop, where five subject working groups were established. Three of these are actively developing adaptation initiatives of which up-to-the-minute details can be provided if required. Such developments can be encouraged using:

- CNAA subject committees

- related open learning initiatives

- existing subject teacher groups (e.g. ASLIP).

It was felt inappropriate in this project, given the timescale and funding available, to approach individual CNAA subject committees. However, they should be consulted and informed, and it is right that they should be invited to support and initiate suitable developments. Among the supportive actions which CNAA subject committees could take are the following:

- publicise relevant working groups in their area, and report their views on desirable developments

- allocate some small amount of resources to establish and develop such working groups

- establish a Working Party to comment on Open University courses in their area, and identify any which show potential for adaptation.

Several open learning initiatives in various parts of the country are directly related to the present project in that they also involve adaptation or use of the Open University materials, and we have been able to provide input into several of these, e.g. at Birmingham Polytechnic, Coventry Polytechnic, and Napier College. Obviously channels should remain open between these projects, so that each may learn from the others' experiences. Whilst the project has no wish to establish a monopoly in the adaptation of OU material, the Open University did indicate at the inception of the project that they would prefer to negotiate copyright approval for adaptations with a single party, rather than with a different party for each particular proposal. It therefore seems sensible for all other CNAA projects which involve OU material to be advised by the CNAA of the agreement reached with the OU (see below), and of the fact that this project can assist in obtaining copyright permissions and in other ways.

2.7. Credit Accumulation and Transfer

The provision of adapted Open University courses could ease problems of credit accumulation and transfer in two major ways:

1. For institutions which use the adapted material, the match between

different courses will be more clear, by virtue of using the same texts. Equally, it will be easy to specify differences between courses, for remedial or other purposes, by reference to the texts.

2. For institutions which do *not* use the adapted material, the existence of such material would nevertheless provide useful "benchmarks", which could be used for comparing courses, and for providing a uniform set of standards and a simplifying vocabulary to facilitate discourse between institutions concerning credit transfer. (Note: it is possible that appropriate *unadapted* OU materials could perform this "benchmark" role, and we recommend that the feasibility of this should be investigated further.)

CHAPTER 3

WHY ADAPT OU MATERIALS?

3.1. Summary of chapter

This chapter discusses and describes various methods of using OU material. It argues for a focus on the 20-80 range, i.e. material where more than 20% but less than 80% requires adaptation. Cost estimate are given, and compared with alternative teaching strategies. This comparison shows that on stated assumptions, the adaptation of OU materials is relatively inexpensive. However, it does require a different allocation of resources, both between budget heads and over different time periods.

3.2. Types of OU material and availability

Open University materials may be categorized as follows:

1. text materials
    a. course "units"
    b. tutor marked assignments (TMAs)
    c. tutor notes
    d. computer marked assignments (CMAs)
    e. examinations
    f. summer school materials
    g. other supplementary materials

2. non-text materials
    a. audio tapes (including "audio-vision", linked in with text material)
    b. video material and television programmes
    c. computer aided learning (CAL) materials.

Institutional arrangements already exist for access to categories 2a and 2b, using off-air recording, purchase or hire. For these reasons and because the copyright aspects of adapting such material seem unduly problematic we suggest that **the focus for adaptation of Open University materials should be on text (not audio, video or CAL materials).** Accordingly in the rest of this report, comments relate to text material unless otherwise stated.

It follows from the above proposal that **one criterion for the selection of text for adaptation should be the ease with which it can be made independent of non-text material; references to such material should be purely of bibliographic form, and should not be central to the thread of the text.**

3.3. Alternative methods of using OU materials

In addition to adapting Open University materials, other methods exist whereby the materials can be used in Polytechnics. Although not central to this project, they are described below and we propose that **the CNAA should bring these methods of using OU materials to the attention of individual institutions, and should consider jointly with the OU and OUEE whether greater use of these methods can be encouraged by reducing or re-allocating costs, or by other means**.

3.3.1. Using OU materials unchanged

It can be argued that the most cost-effective way of using OU materials is to adopt unchanged, rather than adapt it. This point of view is discussed below (see Section 3.4).

Unchanged, original OU materials can be used in Polytechnics - and indeed often are. Typically this involves either:

- off-air recording, hire or purchase of radio or television broadcasts, or
- purchase of OU texts for the Polytechnic or departmental library.

The procedure for obtaining off-air recording licences appears to work smoothly. However, concerning OU texts, we have heard reports from participants at the York workshop and elsewhere that

1. bookshops often do not have OU texts in stock
2. bookshops have difficulty identifying texts from the information at would-be purchasers' disposal (this may be ISBN, course title, unit title, binding title, course number, or unit or binding number)
3. libraries have no clear, consistent method of cataloguing OU texts; nor do they publicise the method used.

In 1985, the Vice Chancellor of the Open University commissioned a firm of consultants to report confidentially on the marketing of OU materials and this report may well refer to and make recommendations concerning these points.

A particularly useful development would be a bibliographic database (with key-words) of all Open University materials (not just text). Such a database could extend the role of ECCTIS, and could be interrogated on-line by potential users of material, as well as bookshops.

Two particular ways in which Polytechnics could make greater use of un-adapted OU materials would be by *bulk discounts* and *photocopying licenses*. At present, both of these exist but are not exploited in any systematic way. Yet there is enormous potential here for developments which could benefit the OU and Polytechnic institutions jointly - bulk discounts would be appropriate where entire texts find use in Polytechnic teaching, and photocopying licenses would be appropriate where only parts of texts are to be used. Accordingly, we suggest that **the OU should review and further publicise its policy in the areas outlined above in order to encourage greater use of OU materials in other institutions.**

3.3.2. Discontinued courses

The Open University has fairly strict rules about discontinuing courses after a set number of years, usually about 8. This is done almost regardless of whether the material is still suitable for OU students, and completely regardless of whether it would be suitable for non-OU students. Such material is often pulped or otherwise destroyed. Apart from courses which are genuinely obsolete, or discontinued for quality reasons, such 'discontinued' courses could often find ready use outside the OU. For example, *M341: Foundations of Statistical Inference*, which was far too hard for OU students, and was widely deemed a "failure" within the OU because it was too difficult, included material which may be suitable for other markets; and similar situations probably pertain for other courses also. **It may be in the joint interests of the OU and other teaching institutions such as Polytechnics that the OU should circulate information concerning any texts it plans to pulp, and the price at which they might be sold, and allowing time for potential purchasers to act on this information before pulping goes ahead.**

3.3.3. Future courses

Just as discontinued courses may be of use to non-OU institutions, so courses which are still in the process of production may be useful. Indeed, the level of usefulness would be increased if Polytechnic personnel could keep in touch with new OU courses while they are being produced. In this way, proposals for adaptation could proceed hand-in-hand with developing the OU course, with consequent gains in time and other resources. In certain cases it may be possible to develop an OU course which is suitable for use in Polytechnics in an *unadapted* form. However, this would require close liaison from the start.

An attempt was made by this project along these lines, to arrange funding to second a Polytechnic lecturer on to the new Open University Information Technology course team. The course team chairman was keen that this should happen, and endeavoured to arrange partial funding from within the OU. In the event, however, the level of funding obtained fell short of what was required, and it was not possible to implement the plan. **Attempts should continue to be made to collaborate with OU course teams, e.g. by placing Polytechnic academics on appropriate OU course teams, where this can be done to the benefit of both parties.**

3.4. Why not adopt, rather than adapt?

It is reasonable to ask why Polytechnic lecturers cannot adopt OU materials unchanged rather than seek adaptation, if these materials are so excellent. The main general reasons, other than the logistical ones covered above, are that OU materials are aimed at a different audience, following different courses, and with different motives. In addition, each Polytechnic course may have its own specific reasons, being based on its own philosophy and structure, making use of local staff and resources and being planned on a traditional basis. A Polytechnic course team which is successful and yet is looking for open learning material may be unwilling to change philosophy, structure or particular resources. It will look for material that is reasonably close to what exists or can easily be adapted. The views expressed at the York Workshop were that

- areas where unchanged adoption is appropriate are the exception rather than the rule (an estimate might be 5%)

- if adoption is required, procedures already exist for Polytechnics to

obtain the necessary materials (bookshop purchase, photocopying licences, bulk discounts, etc.).

It was also suggested that procedures for adopting OU materials are

- obscure, complicated, and poorly publicised (especially for parts of the course not marketed by OUEE)

- unduly costly, in a direct financial sense.

3.5. The extent of adaptation required

Examination of a wide range of potentially suitable OU material, suggests that the vast bulk of it lies in the range which requires between 20% and 80% adaptation. That is, out of 10 pages of OU material, on average a total of between 2 and 8 of these pages will require adaptation.

This observation is partly empirical, and is partly the result of a feeling that if less than 20% adaptation is required, then the OU text could be adopted unchanged; and if more than 80% adaptation is required, then it is better to start afresh. Needless to say, these percentages are likely to be approximate in any particular case.

Within the 20% to 80% range, it seems sensible to concentrate initially on OU material requiring least adaptation, i.e. adaption should be limited to material requiring between 20% and 50% adaptation. This view has been adhered to throughout the remainder of this report.

It is difficult to lay down general principles or criteria for deciding the extent of adaptation required in particular cases. This will be one of the first tasks of any adaptation working group. However, a first estimate of the extent of adaptation required could be obtained by assessing for each page whether it

(a) is suitable in unchanged or slightly modified form for Polytechnic students

(b) may simply be omitted

(c) requires adaption or rewriting.

The extent of adaption required may then be estimated initially as

$$c/(a+c).$$

3.6. Criteria to be applied in deciding which OU material to adapt

In identifying OU material suitable for adaptation, a variety of criteria must be taken into account. The most important are the following:

1. The material should be *'core' introductory material*, i.e. OU levels 1 or 2, for first year Polytechnic students. This is because these classes are

a. large

b. receptive to new learning strategies, whereas older students may be more set in their ways

c. less variable between institutions

d. less changeable over time.

2. These materials would have a *wide range of other uses*, e.g. for

   a. HNC, HND, and other courses

   b. remedial use, and for freeing staff from lecturing to concentrate more on remedial students

   c. classes which are difficult to teach at present.

3. It is important to focus on *expanding subject areas*. Arts and Education have been deemed less important, whereas computing and 'new technology' are areas where good open learning material from the OU could be used. (However, in-service training of teachers may soon be a 'boom' area.)

4. *Suitable OU material* must be available: there is no problem here, because good quality OU material is available in many areas: some of this has now been identified by working groups established at the York workshop.

5. *Suitable personnel for adaptation* must be available: this implies that the subject area should have a body of Polytechnic lecturers who are part-time OU tutors, who are interested in doing the adaptation.

3.7. Costs of adapting Open University materials

This section attempts a cost-comparison of

- adapting Open University materials
- developing open learning materials for Polytechnics *de novo*
- continuing with current teaching practices.

As with all cost comparisons, the figures must be regarded as orders-of-magnitude rather than precise values. Also, several non-academic items have not been costed where these were likely to be roughly constant in all three cases. In each case we consider the replacement of 40 hours of lectures by OL materials. Other lectures may remain, but these are the same in all three options.

3.7.1. Adapting OU materials

We propose below (p. 32) that an adaptation working group should consist of 2-3 persons who would work on the adaptation for 22 working weeks. Working at the rate of replacing approximately one hour of lectures per working week, we suppose that they will produce material to replace 40 hours of lectures, and that this material will be used by 400 students for each of 4 years. We assume 10 pages of text (or 2.5 double-sided A4 sheets) per 1 hour of lecture. Thus we are talking of a print-run of 1600 (= 400 students x 4 years) copies of 100 (=2.5 sheets per hour x 40 hours) double-sided sheets.

Using the formula

$$£(3+18x)$$

for x-thousand double-sided A4 sheets (see p.43 below), the total print cost is

$$£100(3 + (18 \times 1.6)) = £3180.$$

Labour costs for 22 adaptation working weeks total say £20,000 (for two lecturers), or £30,000 for three. (This assumes an annual cost of £23,000 per lecturer.) In addition, there are secretarial, travel and postage costs of say £5000. There may also be some copyright fees to pay - say £2000.

This gives an overall total of some £30,000 or £40,000, depending on the size of the working group. The key factor is clearly the size of the working group.

3.7.2. Developing Open Learning materials *de novo*

We must assume that the time taken to develop new material would exceed the time required to adapt OU material. Supposing that an increase of 50% is needed, labour costs would be say £30,000 (for two persons), or £45,000 for three. Other costs would be the same as before - viz. £3000 for printing costs, £2000 for copyright, and £5000 for secretarial costs, etc., a total of £10000. There would be no copyright costs. This gives a total of some £40,000 or £55,000, depending on the size of working group.

Another way of performing this calculation is to use the formula which has been developed by people who have developed a lot of open learning material. This suggests that 100 hours are needed to develop one hour of study material. Using the above assumptions about polytechnic lecturers' costs, this would give a figure of about £59,000 to develop 40 hours of material.

3.7.3. Continuing with current teaching practices

The costs of teaching 400 students for each of 4 years for a total of 40 hours each may now be estimated. Here the big unknown is class size.

If the average class size is 40, then we are talking of 10 Polytechnic lecturers lecturing for 40 hours per year each. Using 600 teaching hours as the annual load, the cost of these lectures is

$$400/600 \times £23,000 = £15,000, \text{ say}$$

per year. Over four years the total cost is £60,000.

If the average class size is 20, not 40, then the total cost doubles, to £120,000; if the average class size is 60, then the figure reduces to £40,000.

3.7.4. Comparison

The above figures may now be compared (all figures in £K)

	Low estimate	High estimate
Current teaching practice	40	120
Produce new OL material	40	55
Adapt OU material	30	40

These estimates must not be relied on unduly, but they do suggest that on the assumptions specified, the costs of adapting OU materials compare favourably with alternative options.

The above figures may appear surprisingly high. However, they are based on the provision of a total of 64,000 hours of teaching (400 students x 40 hours x 4 years). Therefore even the most expensive figure costs out at less than £2 per student hour. The least expensive figure is under 50p per hour.

It should be noted that the open learning costings provided above are relatively insensitive to the number of students or the number of years. Thus a doubling of either of these figures would affect only the print cost element in the open learning strategies (an increase of say £3000) whereas it would double the costs of current teaching practice (an increase of say £60,000).

The differences between the figures in the above table indicate the extent of savings obtainable by replacing lectures with OL material. However, use of OL may require additional tutorials, and the difference in these savings indicates the amount of funding available for extra tutorials under OL *without increasing the aggregate cost* This potential extra funding ranges from £10,000 or £25 per student (low estimate) to £80,000 or £200 per student (high estimate), and represents an increase in face-to-face teaching resources of between a quarter and two-thirds compared with current practice. In addition, with OL material, the quality of the learning experience will have been greatly enhanced. (This point has been made to us by many active teachers in higher education - that even if OL methods are not cheaper than traditional methods, they nevertheless are to be preferred on educational grounds.)

CHAPTER 4

ASSESSING LIKELY DEMAND

4.1. Summary of chapter

This chapter presents estimates of the likely demand for adapted OU material. Estimates range from 1500 to 3000 copies per annum, in addition to those purchased by students on Polytechnic courses which are built around the material. Reports from publishers indicate that this level of demand represents a viable publishing proposition.

4.2. Introduction

The demand for educational products may be assessed in various ways, none of which is certain. The most common method is "seat of the pants hunch". The next most common method is informal peer assessment, obtained by talking ideas through in an informal manner with experienced teaching professionals. These methods were used in the early days of the project, and the results were most encouraging. Especially influential was the enthusiasm shown for the scheme by Polytechnic lecturers who knew how the OU had influenced their own teaching and felt it could be of wider beneficial influence. Academics at the OU were also supportive, and keen to extend the influence of their materials, although caution was expressed here concerning aspects of copyright.

A third method used was the more systematic appraisal of attitudes to the project from teachers in Polytechnics. In 1985 some 100 heads of departments and Polytechnic lecturers were contacted, in order to gauge their interest in the project. Many of the responses indicated a willingness to use adapted OU materials, and well over half of the respondents expressed a desire to participate in the project in one way or another - this varied from some who were keen to get involved in the adaptation work, to others who were ready to read and try out draft materials.

The authors believe that the above three methods of demand appraisal amount *in toto* to more than is done for many educational innovations. However, in addition to these a more formal appraisal of demand is now reported on. As part of the project, a market appraisal was commissioned from SBC Economic and Marketing Consultants. This appraisal involved an assessment of existing statistics and interviews with leading publishers and members of the book trade. The full SBC report is available separately as Working Paper No.3, and has been used freely in what follows.

4.3. Overall background

A first step towards estimating demand is given by the following table which shows that in 1985 there were approximately 2.6 million students in the United Kingdom, of whom

- 21% were in Engineering and Technology
- 21% were in Business and Social Studies
- 6% were in science subjects

Table 4.1: Students in higher and further education, 1985; by subject group ('000).

	HE	FE	Total
All subjects	822	1821	2643
Engineering and technology	159	394	553 (21%)
Science	127	41	168 (6%)
Administrative, business and social studies	233	316	549 (21%)

Source: *Education Statistics for the United Kingdom 1985*, Table 26.

Although these figures do not differentiate between various categories of student (full-time/part-time, undergraduate/postgraduate, etc.), they do show that even a one per cent take-up in the relevant subject areas can lead to extremely high levels of demand.

From the beginning it was anticipated that the main demand for adapted texts would come from higher education students. These can be divided into three categories:

1. Polytechnic students are seen as the core market because the material is to be specifically adapted for their courses and needs;

2. University students would form a supplementary market since the material is aimed at their level of study but not so closely to their rather diverse courses;

3. Other students on professional and vocational courses (such as HNC, HND) would offer a general market of a fairly small size.

Likely sales potential is now calculated for each of these categories in five proposed subject areas, using an estimate of maximum potential demand and multiplying this by the likely percentage uptake.

4.4. The Polytechnic Market

A breakdown of student numbers in the UK's 30 polytechnics was obtained from the Polytechnics' Central Admissions System (PCAS), to determine the potential market in this sector. Table 4.2 provides a summary of potential demand from undergraduate students undertaking degree courses in the five subject areas under consideration. This suggests an aggregate of 7700 units per annum from student sales, ranging from 1200 to 2000 units in individual subject areas. These estimates, however, exclude any sales to polytechnic students on joint and modular courses, where topics or entire subject areas may be incorporated into their main study programmes. While difficult to quantify, this could add 1900 to potential unit sales of Business Studies texts per annum, 1800 p.a. in Computer Studies, 1200 p.a. in Introductory Biology, 1500 p.a. in Quantitative Methods and as much as 1800 p.a. in Technology.

Table 4.2: Polytechnic Students Annual Sales Potential

	Potential	Max likely take-up
Business Studies	2000	1000
Computer Studies	1800	900
Introductory Biology	1200	600
Quantitative Methods	1300	650
Technology	1400	700
Total	7700	3850

Publishers have little experience of the sort of open learning material now proposed, but they suggest that the take-up rate, even of core reading material rarely exceeds 50% due to library borrowing etc., and is often as low as 30%, particularly in later years when secondhand copies are in circulation. Consequently, it is projected that sales to polytechnic students are unlikely to exceed the figures given in the final column of Table 4.2, unless significant sales can be made to non-core readers in these institutions.

4.5. The University Market

The university textbook market would be more difficult to penetrate than the polytechnics. Amongst the reasons for this are those of heterogeneity, conservatism and a general difficulty in securing lecturer recommendations for new reading material. At the level of degree courses aimed at, where students may be studying three or even four different subjects in one year, very little time is devoted to reading beyond core material. Without lecturer recommendations, therefore, substantial sales are unlikely to materialise. Should the adapted material achieve only supplementary status, we are advised that the likely take-up rate would fall from between 30-50% to around 15% or less.

On the basis of UCCA student numbers, Table 4.3 summarises the estimated take-up levels under the different scenarios.

Table 4.3: University Students Annual Sales Potential

	Potential	Core take-up	Suppl. take-up
Business Studies	7000	3500	1050
Computer Studies	9000	4500	1350
Introductory Biology	4000	2000	600
Quantitative Methods	4500	2250	675
Technology	5000	2500	750
Total	29500	14750	4425

Regardless of these hypothetical estimates, publishers were unanimous in suggesting that the adapted course material is generally unlikely to attain more than supplementary reading status and expected take-up rates should be downgraded accordingly.

4.6. The Professional and Vocational Market

In addition to 30 polytechnics and 46 universities in the UK, there are some 572 maintained or assisted colleges of further education (excluding Colleges of Education and specialist institutions). While the type and level of subjects taught within these institutions varies enormously, the OU product may have limited appeal to many such students, depending on the degree of complexity and specificity of the course material that is adapted. Publishers have advised that, across the broad spectrum of such institutions, a maximum average take-up rate of 10% should be assumed. Table 4.4 therefore details the likely potential for the product in this sector of the market.

Table 4.4: Professional and Vocational Student Annual Sales Potential

	Potential	Max likely take-up
Business Studies	9000	900
Computer Studies	5000	500
Introductory Biology	2000	200
Quantitative Methods	2000	200
Technology	10000	1000
Total	28000	2800

4.7. Other Markets

4.7.1. General Markets

While much would depend on the form of the product and the subject area in question, book retailers felt that any academic textbook would have little appeal in general bookshop markets. There may be a limited potential for professional, topical and contemporary texts in Business Studies, Computer Studies and, to a lesser extent, Technology, although the OU material in question may not satisfy these requirements.

4.7.2. Overseas Markets

The publishers interviewed agreed that the texts would need to have at least a limited international appeal in order to produce satisfactory overall sales. Several publishers recognised minor potential in these markets for the more marketable and less academically specialised OU texts.

4.7.3. Institutional Sales

In addition to the above, one-off institutional sales might be expected to amount to 300-400 units per title.

4.8. Total Potential Sales

Ignoring any institutional sales it is anticipated that aggregate sales would be no more than 3000 p.a. in Business Studies, 2700 p.a. in Computer Studies, 1400 p.a. in Biology, 1500 p.a. in QM and 2500 p.a. in Technology (although the topicality and complexity of the subject matter is of particular importance in this instance in order to achieve this figure). When gauged against the general performance of existing academic texts, these figures have been confirmed as accurate working estimates by publishers, distributors and retailers alike.

Different publishers regard different levels of sales as reflecting publishing success. One major publisher felt that sales of 2000 per annum are necessary to gain respectability and closer to 3000-5000 p.a. is required before the book would be considered a success. However, the majority of other larger publishers would consider a text to be viable if it achieves average sales of 1000-1500 p.a. averaged over a 5-6 year lifespan. In contrast, many smaller publishers can survive on sales of only 400-500 copies per year.

The above estimates allow a ranking of subject areas from the point of view of market appeal. On the basis of these figures, while all of the texts should eventually be judged on their individual merits, nearly all of the publishers spoken to agreed that they would be unlikely to publish texts in all five subject areas.

However, the above calculations do indicate a favourable outcome for the areas of business studies and computing, whereas prospects for the other three areas are less favourable, although still above the minimum required for viability.

CHAPTER 5
ADAPTATION

5.1. Summary of chapter

This chapter describes the protocol which has been agreed with the OU, and makes recommendations concerning the establishment, funding and operation of adaptation working groups.

5.2. Adaptation procedure agreed with Open University

Following discussions with senior staff at the Open University a procedure has been agreed for this project which was confirmed by a letter from the Secretary of the OU dated 9th April 1986. Here is the text of the letter:

> Dear Mr. Bibby,
>
> OU/Poly Project at Huddersfield Polytechnic
>
> Further to your discussions with Messrs Rumble and Brindle, I am pleased to confirm that the Open University welcomes the initiative of the OU/Poly Project at Huddersfield Polytechnic for a feasibility study on the adaptation of OU course materials and is pleased to encourage it subject to the following conditions.
>
> 1. The University is not able to offer any resources for the study other than course material in which it holds the copyright for adaptation by Polytechnic staff (under the conditions referred to below).
>
> 2. At an early stage in the process of considering adaptation of OU materials for use in Polytechnics, the Head of the Project should contact the Open University through the Office of the Secretary to seek the University's agreement in principle to a particular adaptation. To enable this to be done, an outline of the Project's specific plans would need to be submitted with this request. The University's agreement in principle would provide a safeguard that any subsequent work on the adaptation of its materials undertaken by the Project would not be wasted.
>
> 3. As a general rule "in principle" agreement would only be refused on the following grounds:
>
>   (a) the material which the Project proposes to adapt is regarded as obsolete by the responsible University faculty.
>
>   (b) an identifiable Open University author exercises his right under University terms and conditions to refuse to permit his or her material to be adapted as proposed, and that the refusal is not unreasonable, and is upheld by the University Secretary. I confirm that the copyright of all Open University course material is vested in the Open University, and the final decision on its use rests with the Secretary.
>
>   (c) adaptation of the proposed material is already in progress in the Open University (e.g. by the OU Centre for Continuing Education)
>
>   (d) exclusive rights for adaptation have been reserved or granted by Open University Educational Enterprises Ltd. to an external publisher
>
>   (e) the material which the Project proposes to use is not the copyright of the Open University

4. In the event that the University gives "in principle" agreement, then the Project should proceed with its adaptations on the basis of its outline plan, taking care to consult wherever possible the relevant academics within the Open University.

5. At a later stage in the adaptation process you should contact us for formal approval. Provided that the consultations referred to in (3) above have taken place, there should be no problem in granting formal approval.

6. The results of the feasibility study should be made available to the University. A continuation of the arrangements and conditions agreed by the University for the feasibility study stage should be subject to review to include discussion of royalty payments with OUEE for widened use of adapted OU copyright material.

At each stage of requesting approval, you should receive a reply from us within a few weeks. I would not like to think that the maximum delay would exceed two months.

Yours sincerely,

DJ Clinch
Secretary

Subsequently, along with his comments on the draft of this report, the Secretary amplified the above procedure as follows:

The University has two major comments. One is academic, the other financial. The groundrules governing the academic approval of adaptions of OU materials were laid down in my letter of 9th April, and clarified in my subsequent letter of 29th July. The move from a feasibility to a larger scale project does not affect these groundrules, as spelt out in points (3), (4) and (5) of my letter of 9th April.

However, while the University was happy to offer resources in kind, in the form of course materials in which it holds the copyright, to enable the feasibility project to proceed, the project may now, on the basis of your report, move from a project designed to test the feasibility of your ideas, to one in which Open University material is systematically adapted for profit. As indicated in my letter of 29th July, to which you replied at the end of August, the University as the originator of the material, would wish to see a proper return on its original investment in the courses, in the form of royalties (expressed as a percentage of the sales price) paid by the adapting party or parties. In line with its normal practice, potential adaptors would need to negotiate royalties and fees with the University's wholly owned subsidiary company, Open University Educational Enterprises Ltd. This would be a substantive change from the first principle set out in my letter of 9th April, and would reflect the Project's intention to exploit OU materials on a commercial basis. OUEE would also be prepared to clear academic approval through the OU channels (and identify potential OU academics able and willing to work with the adaptors), thus altering the point of contact in point (2) of my letter, from the Secretary's Office to OUEE, but maintaining the benefit of a single channel of communication.

The recommendations which follow are based on the above letters and on views expressed at the York Workshop.

5.3. Adaptation Working Groups

5.3.1. Description of proposed working groups

We recommend that **adaptation of OU material should be carried out by** *ad hoc* **working groups**. In order to encourage smooth working and minimise bureaucracy, as a general rule, **working groups should consist of**

- **between 2 and 6 lecturers**
- **from a wide spread of institutions**
- **which should be geographically compact (maximum of 100 miles distance from each other).**

As a general rule, **working group members should be Polytechnic lecturers who are (or have been) OU part-time tutors**. Also, **attempts should be made to involve the relevant OU Faculty Link or other central OU academic in each working group**.

In order to give the working groups flexibility for their task, they should be allowed to devise their own modes of working. However, it is suggested that as a general rule

- **one member of the working group shall be designated** *convenor*, **to be responsible to the Project for the progress of the working group;**
- **the convenor shall be responsible for liaison between the working group and**
  - *** other arms of the OU/Poly Project**
  - *** the OU Faculty Link.**

After discussion with potential working group members, **the convenor's first tasks shall be to**

- **finalise membership of the working group, and allocate responsibilities**
- **specify the working group's terms of reference, in consultation with other interested parties. (These terms of reference shall specify the philosophy of the proposed adaptation, as well as the units and** *page numbers* **of the OU text which is to be adapted. The terms of reference may be changed in the light of experience, but should be specified from the start.)**
- **allocate initial responsibilities** *and page numbers* **between working group members; each to prepare a written outline of the amendments proposed, which is to be circulated in time for individual consideration** *before* **the first working group meetings.**
- **specify a timetable for the working group.**

The following may be considered as a "benchmark model" for a timetable, to be flexibly adapted according to circumstances (weeks are full-time "working" weeks, to be modified in the event of part-time working, holidays, etc.; weeks 3-4 and 13-16 in particular may require modification in some working groups):

- convenor allocates pages for adaptation to individual working group members, and ensures that request is made to Secretary of the Open University for "in principle" approval (Week 1); this request should indicate the anticipated lifetime of the adaptation (see p.39)

- working group members outline and circulate proposed adaptations (Week 2)

- working group considers proposed adaptations; convenor sends these to Faculty Link; working group meets to revise proposals (Weeks 3-4)

- working group members prepare full-length adapted drafts and circulate these to other members; convenor sends them to Faculty Link (Weeks 5-8)

- working group meets to revise drafts, and prepares feedback material for developmental testing

- convenor prepares complete draft for developmental purposes (Weeks 10-12)

- developmental testing in several Polytechnics (arranged as far as possible as part and parcel of normal teaching duties); reporting and analysis of feedback (Weeks 13-16)

- meeting to revise drafts (Week 17)

- convenor prepares final version (Weeks 18-20)

- convenor ensures that final version goes to Open University for "final approval", and that procedures for publication have been arranged (Weeks 21-22).

We also **recommend** that as a general rule, **after each working group has completed its work and delivered a manuscript, the manuscript should pass through the following stages**

- **project editing, to ensure uniform house style**

- **delivery to publisher**

- **distribution to readers**

- **publisher's editing**

- **galley and page proofs to go to Project and to working group convenor**

- **printing.**

It should not be difficult to identify personnel for particular adaptations. During the

project contact was made with:

- Open University faculty members, especially staff tutors
- part-time OU Tutors
- teachers' groups, e.g. ASLIP.

Contacts tend to grow through suggestions from one potential working group member to another. The major problems in connection with identifying personnel for adaptation work are those arising from *embarras de richesse*. Personnel tend to *identify themselves*. Nevertheless, in selecting members to form a working group, the following criteria are important.

1. *As individuals*, the members should be
    a. enthusiastic
    b. clear and concise in their writing; articulate but not long winded
    c. personable
    d. energetic
    e. able to work independently
    f. able to give constructive criticism
    g. able to respond constructively to criticism
    h. well-organised
    i. able to meet deadlines
    j. good teachers
    k. familiar with OU material and with related Polytechnic courses
    l. supported by their institution
    m. available
    n. fundable.

2. In addition, *as a group* the members should
    a. cover a range of institutions and courses
    b. be able to work well together
    c. be within travelling distance of each other.

The above criteria, *but not necessarily only the above criteria*, should be used in identifying personnel for any particular working group.

5.3.2. Funding and availability

It is suggested above that personnel for adaptation must be *fundable* and must be *available*. These two factors are linked, but the latter is probably more vital than the former.

Availability. It is easy to underestimate the amount of work required to produce good quality open learning material, and is correspondingly hazardous to take the stated availability of personnel at face value, especially if commitment to the project is secondary to other commitments. **Ideally, members of adaptation working groups should be freed of** *all other teaching commitments* **while they are working on the adaptation.**

We recognise that the above is not always possible to attain. Indeed, **it may in some cases be sensible to develop open learning material hand-in-hand with teaching a course which allows the lecturer to try out and evaluate that material.**

Fundability. In saying that a person must be fundable, what is meant is no more than that ways must be found to make him or her available. *Open Learning material cannot be prepared in the interstices of one's time.*

Funding may come through the Head of Department allowing adaptation work to feature in the individual's teaching load. This is one very tangible way in which institutions can express "support" for the project. However, in view of the pressures upon Polytechnic teachers at the present time, one should not expect this to happen very often.

Alternatively, an individual teacher may choose to spend part of his or her sabbatical period working on the project.

Thirdly, it may be possible to arrange funding for replacement part-time teachers to be found. This is usually cheaper than paying the adapter directly, and very often this will be the preferred option.

A final option, alternate to releasing adapters from their teaching duties (which may be inconvenient in certain cases), would be to arrange funding for the adapters to be paid directly on a contract basis. This has the disadvantage that the project would then be competing with the individual's teaching commitments for the allocation of his or her time. However it has the advantage of enabling tight control, if the contract is suitably worded. Alternatively, the contract could specify reimbursement on a royalty basis, which has cash-flow advantages for the project (and corresponding disadvantages for the adapter).

Accordingly it is suggested that an open mind be kept on the question of reimbursing adapters, including the possibility of royalty payments; but that **justice must be seen to be done in balancing alternative modes of payment if more than one is in use.** This last comment may mean that if an adapter is released on full salary, then he or she would be less entitled to royalties than those who were funded in other ways.

5.4. Links with The Open University

It was felt at an early stage in the project that links with the Open University should be formalised and a mutually agreed procedure for adaption followed as outlined in Section 5.2.

One reason for this is that the OU can present a somewhat bewildering many-headed

bureaucratic structure. It has been described as a cross between an octopus and a camel. For outsiders as for insiders, the need to negotiate with and placate a range of interests inside the OU can be energy-sapping as well as demoralising. The Faculties and OUEE show especial potential in this regard.

For this reason, we **recommend** that

- **all requests for approval concerning particular adaptations should be sent *via* the Office of the Secretary of the University (even if these requests are delegated by him to OUEE)**

- **all *academic* consultations should be done with the "relevant academics" in the University.**

In order to avoid confusion over this procedure, we propose that **the OU Secretary should be invited to specify a minimum list of "relevant academics" in connection with any particular adaptation**, and that, as a matter of courtesy and to encourage a free flow of information, **copies of any particular adaptation request, along with a further invitation to specify a minimum list of "relevant academics", should be sent to the Dean of the relevant OU Faculty, and the Head of the relevant OU Discipline.**

This simple procedure will

- reduce bureaucratic confusion

- provide a procedure that the OU is happy to work with

- minimise the risk of confusion through uncertain role definitions within the OU

- put the onus on the OU Secretary to ensure adequate consultation within the OU

- allow a stable procedure for all adaptations, regardless of which faculty or section of the OU they affect.

However, it is important that the Project should retain good working relationships at all levels of the Open University. This is important because

- the prime source for *academic* input to the Project from the OU will derive from the University Faculties: it is essential that their support is nurtured and that any criticisms they may make are taken on board

- the Faculties and other arms of the OU can aid immensely in *facilitating* the Project, by informing those involved of developments, available feedback, rewritings, etc.

The Open University has six faculties (including the School of Education), each with up to a dozen discipline areas and a hundred or more academics. The Project has established "Faculty Links" in each Faculty, nominated by the relevant OU Dean to be responsible for liaison between our project and the Faculty. We recommend that **this system of faculty links should be developed and extended, to include increased consultation, and a specification of roles, responsibilities, and procedures for**

initiating good developments of OU materials.

5.5. The role of the centre

In developing the path surveyed by this project, questions arise concerning the role of the project "centre", as distinct from the individual subject working groups.

Firstly, is there any need for a centre? It might be argued that each individual working group could negotiate its own arrangements with the OU publishers, and other bodies. This certainly is not impossible; however in our view it would divert subject specialists away from their own area of expertise and into somewhat tangled areas of copyright, publishing logistics, and liaison with various arms of the OU. Moreover, it is precisely in these area that we have ourselves developed a certain amount of experience and expertise. We therefore recommend that **the continuation of the project should foresee the role for a "centre", as well as the individual working groups.**

Secondly, what would the centre do? In a nutshell, the role of the centre should be to *make it easy for the individual working groups to produce good learning material.* We stress the role of "making it easy", because we are acutely aware that central bureaucracies all too often appear to do the opposite. In the context of this project, "making it easy" involves

- liaising with outside bodies such as funding bodies, the Open University and publishers, including matters of publishing format, house style, etc.
- being available for consultation by working groups, and in certain cases playing a 'trouble shooting' role
- advising and seeking advice on contractual matters
- energising new initiatives: new sources of funding, new working groups, etc.

Thirdly, how would the centre be funded? In the long run the centre could be funded at least in part from the sales of materials emanating from the project, and it would not be unreasonable for a royalty of say 1% to be made payable to the centre. However, in the short run we see no alternative to a measure of external funding. In our view, it would be correct symbolically, and also in terms of recognising mutual self-interest, if the CNAA and OU could jointly obtain the necessary funding, from their own or from other sources. The funding we have in mind would be relatively slight, representing perhaps one day a week over a period of two years. After that, in our view, the position of the project should be re-assessed.

Finally, where should the centre be located? Geographic centrality could be important here, and we should be delighted if the Open University were able to offer accommodation for this purpose in Milton Keynes. We feel on balance that location in the CNAA would *not* be optimal, although we do recognise that the project cannot develop without CNAA support. A third alternative, which may in some ways be preferable to an OU location, would be to continue the project's location in a Polytechnic or similar institution. This option would, if a location in Huddersfield or Edinburgh is chosen, also allow the continued participation of those involved in setting up the project.

5.6. Copyright

The law of copyright as it affects this project is relatively clear, and means that one cannot *copy or adapt* Open University materials without OU permission. The White Paper on Copyright (Cmnd. 9712, April 1986) is unlikely to change this situation - nor should it, for it is perfectly proper that the OU should have rights in determining how its materials should be used.

The Open University Secretary has confirmed that the copyright of *all* OU course material is vested in the Open University, and that the final decision on its use rests with the Secretary. This clarification is important because it limits the number of formal contact-points which have to be maintained within the OU for copyright purposes. The clarification naturally excludes material identified as third party copyright (i.e. materials whose copyright is held by a third-party, other than the OU). Accordingly we recommend that **such third-party materials should generally be excluded from adaptation under this project.**

However, far from being obstructive, the Open University has been extremely supportive of this project as far as copyright is concerned. Indeed, the only resource it has offered for our project is the "course material in which it holds the copyright". The OU Copyrights Manager has encouraged the project to go ahead, and the protocol described elsewhere has been developed in discussion with him.

It should also be noted that the Open University has offered the OU/Poly Project access to all OU artwork and although some payment for this may be necessary, its value could be considerable. **Consideration should be given in any adaptation to the possibility of using OU artwork, in order to maximise excellence and minimise costs.**

It would seem appropriate in general that **copyright in the adapted material should be held jointly between the Open University and a second party (not necessarily the CNAA): the copyright byline being of the form**

- **Original material, The Open University**
- **This adaptation, (second party)**

5.7. Royalties

In the event of profits/royalties arising from publication of the adapted materials, these should be distributed in some just and manageable way between the various parties. For simplicity, we recommend that **royalties shall be distributed initially between two major parties, namely:**

1. **The Open University or OUEE, who shall be responsible for its onward transmission to and distribution between OU bodies, including OUEE, OU faculties and the original author**

2. **The Project "centre", who shall be responsible for its onward transmission to and distribution between all other bodies, including the adapters, the OU/Poly Project, and individual Polytechnics.**

In allocating royalties between these two major parties we recommend that, subject to individual contracts,

- **the Open University's royalties should be based upon the proportion of the finished product which is identifiably OU material; thus, assuming 10% as the normal royalty for unadapted material, if one-half of the finished product was identifiably OU material, then their royalties would be 5%**

- **in the event of failure to agree on the proportion specified in the previous paragraph, its value shall be decided by two academics nominated as arbitrators, one nominated by the Open University, and one nominated by the CNAA.**

- **unless otherwise agreed, the Project "centre" shall be entitled to a royalty of some 1% of selling price**

- **authors' royalties shall be in line with those normally paid by the book trade (circa 10% for a sole author).**

5.8. Problems of updating

One of the items of special concern to CNAA was the problem of keeping the adapted material up-to-date. The OU typically aims for course lives of some 8 years, with only rare opportunities for making substantial amendments within that period. The expected course life is known whilst it is being prepared, and the course contents are decided correspondingly. The Open University seems to do this successfully, with only occasional criticisms of excessive obsolescence, and there seems no reason why the adapted materials should not be similarly successful. However, in order to minimise the problems of built-in obsolescence, the following **recommendations** are made:

1. **The lifetime of any proposed adaptation should be decided by the working party at an early stage in the adaptation process - generally, soon after obtaining "in principle" approval from the OU.**

2. **As a general rule, adaptation should take the opportunity to update the OU material where necessary, and the working group should specify the proposed lifetime of any adaptation.**

3. **Material which would become obsolete within the proposed lifetime should generally be omitted from the adapted material. An alternative option (to be considered by working parties) is to produce potentially obsolescent material in a form which can be easily updated (e.g. mimeographed).**

4. **In deciding whether or not to proceed with any particular adaptation, advice should be taken on its risks of becoming obsolete.**

5.9. Use of text processors, etc.

Considerable economies can be gained through using suitable text or word processing systems. However

- technology is changing so rapidly that it would be dangerous to lay down rigid guidelines at present

- where documents are being prepared in a variety of locations, as in this project, problems of compatibility are likely to arise.

At an early stage in the lifetime of each group, a survey should be conducted of the word processing facilities available to each member, and policy should be laid down to ensure maximum compatibility, but above all *maximum ease of working for working group members*.

CHAPTER 6

DISSEMINATION

6.1. Summary of chapter

This chapter discusses the various issues involved in producing, printing and distributing the adapted material. These include the format of the adaptations, printing and publishing. There are two main options:

1. Commercial publication

2. In-house publication

A major part of the discussion of (1) is extracted from the report of SBC Economic and Marketing Consultants (Project Working Paper No.3).

6.2. Format

As part of the market survey conducted by SBC, a sample of leading publishers were asked about the appropriate format and medium for publishing the adapted material. Some of the conclusions reached are as follows:

1. As a textbook, the course material would have to conform to a standard publishers' format in terms of page-size, layout, length and presentation. This would entail a 8' x 5' or 9' x 6' page-size, with between 200 and 450 pages. The final product must also have a spine to facilitate retailing and a distinctive imprint to help market the series. Titles, too, must be distinct and specific.

2. Alternative modular, A4-sized and pocket-book versions of textbooks have been tried without success.

3. An alternative format for the product would be to adapt the course material into study guides, similar in style to the Letts school series, Macmillan's Masters guides and the Heinemann Made Simple series.

4. The major difference between textbooks and study guides is that the latter tend to have less emphasis on actual teaching and factual content, and more emphasis on assessment related to facts documented elsewhere. Many publishers, while seeing a gap in the market for such a series, felt that the OU material was of sufficient quality to justify the textbook format, while the handful of publishers who could see no advantage in publishing additional academic textbooks were keener to develop the study guide idea.

5. In study guide form, size and shape of the product would be less important than presentation, and additional retail outlets may be willing to stock the texts. However, most publishers agreed that the reason no such series had been established in the past was because of insufficient market size and much higher marketing costs.

6. The method and extent of adaptation of the OU material is crucial

to its appeal in wider markets. To merely expand the length of the modules without adding to the academic content would diminish the quality of the product, whilst unstructured amalgamation of different course units may leave the final product disjointed or incomplete. Consequently, while some form of study guide may appear to be the preferred option from an editor's viewpoint, there are many market factors to negate these advantages. On balance, the survey suggested that if it is possible to attain the requisite size of product without diminishing the quality of the material, then a textbook format should remain the primary objective.

In contrast to these viewpoints, discussions with part-time OU Tutors, experts in open learning, and at the York workshop, suggested that the best teaching format would be A4-size, spirally bound, units of perhaps 20 pages. A4 was recommended because it is consistent with existing OU material, is similar to student notebook sizes, and has greater scope for student annotations and exercises. Spiral binding was suggested because the booklet needs to lie flat in use. And units of 20 pages were felt to have most flexibility in teaching strategies (i.e. they can form the building blocks selected to meet the needs of a specific course).

6.3. Printing

Closely linked to the discussion about format is the issue of how the material should be produced. It would be possible to print the adaptations in-house and publish them through existing subject networks, or to publish the material commercially using an established publisher. This section considers the costs of producing material in-house, and Section 6.6 discusses the role of commercial publishers.

In-house publication would involve at least four stages:

1. Overseeing production of the final text
2. Arranging printing
3. Risk taking in terms of stock holding etc.
4. Distribution and advertising.

(The last three of these would be handled by the publisher if the material was produced in that way.) The difficulty of identifying the costs in relation to those three activities is that they vary in scale with the number of adaptations undertaken. There would need to be a central organisation which coordinated the activities and which handled the stock control and distribution aspects. The scale of this organisation is difficult to determine.

The major types of printing available, with the sort of print-run for which they are suitable, are

1. photocopying (up to 300)
2. offset litho (200-2000)
3. typesetting (from 1000).

For x-thousand double-sided A4 sheets, the cost of photocopying is approximately

$$£(1 + 30x)$$

for all runs over 100. (These figures and those below are based on estimates provided by the University of Edinburgh.) Adding to this the cost of collating, binding and trimming (£8x), the total cost for the finished product is

$$£(1 + 38x).$$

Using offset litho, the cost (including collating, binding and trimming) is approximately

$$£(7 + 14x) \text{ for runs up to } 1000,$$
$$\text{and } £(3 + 18x) \text{ for runs exceeding } 1000.$$

Comparing these estimates, the switch-over point (from photocopying to offset litho) comes at x=0.25, or a print-run of 250. Hence for all print-runs of the order which the Project envisages, offset litho appears to be the preferable option.

6.4. Developing a house style

One of the requirements of the centre would be to ensure that the adapted material conformed where necessary to a uniform house style. The advantages of this are:

- ensuring a 'brand image', which thereby gets the *concept* of OU adaptation more widely known
- ease of working, because once certain questions (e.g. layout, spelling) are decided, they need not arise again
- ease of distribution, given that different items would tend to be the same size
- possible economies of scale, e.g. on plastic folders, or two-colour covers.

However, one should not over-rate these advantages. In particular, given the range of subjects being mooted, it is likely that any individual user would use just one series of texts, but not others.

Moreover, the quest for a uniform house style could import certain difficulties, e.g.

- the need to ensure effective implementation
- constraints that this may place upon individual working groups
- dangers of over-centralisation.

The preferred strategy is that a single publisher should take all materials emanating from the project; the question of house style should thereafter be left to negotiation with the publisher. However, in the interim, and until the above can be implemented, working groups should adhere to the OU house style.

It is worth noting that the OU A4 format has been criticised as unwieldy and wasteful. Consideration should be given to using a uniform format similar to that of the "Macmillan Masters" series, which is slightly larger than A5 size.

6.5. Length of modules

The precise format of any given adaptation will depend upon the views of the individual working group, the printing technology used, and the publishers. Two clearly stated yet countervailing opinions need to be considered.

1. There is a very strong view from the York Workshop that 10-20 page modules were best: these are do-able by the students, flexible, and encourage sound learning strategies.

2. The SBC Report indicated that publishers are unlikely to be enthusiastic about marketing and distributing such small items.

However, Cambridge University Press does publish small module-based series, such as the "Maths at Work" and School Mathematics Project series. The latter are marketed ingeniously in packs of varying sorts - containing either identical or cognate titles - thus reducing distribution overheads. Therefore, **we do not rule out the possibility of publishing small 10-20 page modules, and this remains our preferred option, whether using in-house or commercial publication.**

6.6. Commercial Publishing

As indicated earlier, publishing involves a range of activities, including the following:

1. Overseeing production of the final text

2. Arranging printing

3. Risk-taking in terms of stocks, etc.

4. Distribution and advertising.

These activities are listed in decreasing order of the ease with which they can sensibly be performed by the project. We recommend that **until alternative arrangements are made, the project should prepare to carry out items 1 and 2 above while seeking sufficient venture capital to cover item 3. However, distribution and advertising should be contracted out on a non-exclusive commission-funded basis to an existing book distributor or other suitable party.**

In the event of material being marketed commercially, the question of royalties becomes more of an issue, and seeking a commercial publisher becomes more sensible.

Although this may in the event turn out not to be possible, we recommend that **for commercial marketing, attempts should be made to find a publisher prepared to publish *all materials* emanating from the project.** This would

- minimise liaison problems.

- ensure a uniform format and 'brand image'.

For x-thousand double-sided A4 sheets, the cost of photocopying is approximately

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In the event of material being marketed commercially, the question of royalties becomes more of an issue, and seeking a commercial publisher becomes more sensible.

Although this may in the event turn out not to be possible, we recommend that **for commercial marketing, attempts should be made to find a publisher prepared to publish *all materials* emanating from the project.** This would

- minimise liaison problems.

- ensure a uniform format and 'brand image'.

Concerning which publisher to choose, we recommend that other things being equal, Open University Enterprises (OUEE) should be invited to publish materials from the project. This would

- be correct 'symbolically', in stressing the links between the project and the Open University
- reduce the number of parties with whom we have to liaise
- reduce the number of parties among whom profits and royalities would have to be distributed
- reduce problems due to differences of house style between the OU and other publishers.

However, using OUEE presents possible difficulties, of which the following come to mind

- OUEE might appear to have 'divided loyalties' in marketing both the 'original' OU text and its 'adapted' counterpart. (However, we are glad to report an assurance from Mr Peter Wright, Managing Director of OUEE, that once it has been decided which strategy is most remunerative to The Open University, no such conflict will arise.)
- we remain to be convinced that OUEE's marketing strategy is as effective as other publishers.

When approaches are made to publishers, other academic publishers should be invited to tender along with OUEE. A small company which is about to expand might be most suitable, because larger companies may find some of our titles to be in too much competition with some of their titles.

The market survey carried out for us by SBC included the following findings:

1. Reaction from publishers to our proposals was generally favourable. Six of those approached registered a positive interest, although two of them would only be willing to consider the publishing package on the basis of a joint venture with the OU or CNAA, as discussed below.
2. Notwithstanding this, the favourable responses must be regarded with caution, since there may be ulterior motives for wishing to take the project on-board:
    a. to stop competitors from gaining advantage without being concerned about marketability;
    b. to protect a publisher's existing list.
3. Options regarding publication were threefold:
    a. use OUEE to publish and distribute the texts;
    b. set up a new operation and publish under its own label;

c. use an established publisher.

4. Taking each in turn, most publishers were unfamiliar with OUEE and its marketing techniques. Many felt that the scale of operation mooted exceeded the capabilities and resources of OUEE. It was recognised that OUEE had made efforts in the past to market OU material, particularly abroad, and that this had met with limited success. However, wider market appeal in the UK did not appear to have been given sufficient consideration by OUEE. On the other hand, with regard to the proposed project, if the existing resources of OUEE could be upgraded to meet these new demands, and provided no conflict of interest was to arise, then there would be several advantages (financial, administrative and academic) in using OUEE rather than another publisher.

5. Setting up a new publishing operation was discouraged by almost all parties. Lack of expertise and reputation, lack of contacts and lack of financial resources were all put forward as reasons for avoiding this option.

6. The publishers who expressed interest in the material said that they would require complete editorial control, and they would have to retain flexibility in being allowed to choose or prioritise subject areas and individual texts for publication. Detailed discussions would also be required regarding the exact contents of texts and any guidelines laid down for the working groups. In some circumstances this could result in almost total re-writing of the material being necessary.

7. If the project wishes to retain more control over editorial decisions, then a joint financial and publishing arrangement warrants attention. The main advantages of this would be as follows:

    a. It would allow the project a greater say in the range of matter to be published;

    b. Marketing would enable the publishers to utilise non-academic contacts while the project could maximise utilisation of academic and institutional contacts.

    c. An all-important imprint for the texts could be developed and used as a marketing instrument.

    d. Improved returns would be available to the project in that net profits could be split 50/50 between the two parties.

8. Those publishers expressing an interest in such a joint venture tentatively suggest that a sum in the region of £60-80,000 would be required from each party if all five subject areas were to be developed initially. It should be noted that those publishers willing to assume 100% control would also probably be willing to reach agreement on such a joint venture.

9. With regard to distribution arrangements, book distributors at present are unlikely to stock books without a pre-determined market being identified and without some guarantee of orders. Thus, major distributors tend to purchase advance orders from publishers on the basis of past reputation. Otherwise, negotiation would be strictly on an order-in/order-out basis. Use of a distributor's services by an independent publisher can be expensive, charging a minimum of 20% of invoice value in respect of warehousing, invoicing and stock control.

   Multiple retailers would only consider stocking the texts if they were study guides rather than academic textbooks and if there was some compatibility with their existing stocks. Independent and college bookshops, on the other hand, would be more willing to stock standard-type textbooks than study guides or course units similar to those available at present. Mail-order firms and student representative bodies felt that this method of retailing would be unsuitable for the product in question. Students at polytechnics, universities, etc. like to see exactly what they are buying, particularly if it is to be used for supplementary reading. Unlike mandatory OU course material, therefore, mail-order marketing of the products would not be suitable. The one mail-order firm in the UK specialising in this type of material would, however, be keen to distribute and retail the products in academic textbook form using its existing contacts and established administrative framework.

10. The student representative bodies were very much in favour of the proposal, although they disagreed with the other respondents on the best means of publishing and marketing the products. Both were in favour of a new publishing operation being established with marketing through the CNAA or a syndicate of educational institutions. Reasons for this choice included:

    a. There would be advantages associated with better potential feedback from the consumers, which would in turn be more likely to be acted upon by a new and specialist publishing organisation.

    b. Direct marketing would allow the organisers to maintain the quality of material inputs.

    c. It would avoid the complacency so often found with traditional educational publishers.

    d. There may be a price advantage for their members.

6.7. In-house publishing

The alternative to commercial publishing is in-house publishing and distribution. By "in-house", we mean that modules would be produced, probably on an offset litho basis, at a participating institution; and the project "centre" would be responsible for arranging this and for ensuring adequate marketing and distribution.

This option allows greater flexibility and speed than using a commercial publisher. However, it presents problems as far as marketing and distribution is concerned,

although these problems become however, less, the more concentrated that sales are within participating institutions.

In-house publishing would also entail an element of internal risk-taking, which the commercial publisher would otherwise underwrite. We feel, however, that **it should be possible to keep the elements of risk sufficiently low for in-house publishing to be a feasible option**, while keeping open the alternative of commercial publication in particular instances.

Within this option, several modes of publication are possible. For example, one can have (a) ad hoc printing for each separate order, or (b) prior printing of calculated print runs. Option (a) has greater flexibility and less risk, but would probably be more costly in the long run, and may be complicated to organise. A variation of (a) would distribute "masters" for printing by individual lecturers. Disadvantages of this are

- more work for lecturers
- costs may fall on institutions rather than students
- royalties might be reduced.

6.8. Adaptable publishing by microdisc

A third option we should like to place on record is based on suggestions made to us by Professor Michael Drake, former Dean of Social Sciences at The Open University. This is that our materials should be published on microdisc in some widely available word-processing format. This would enable individual lecturers to amend them, e.g. by incorporating extra material, references, etc., which are peculiar to their local institution. Alternatively, these amendments could be made by local consortia of lecturers.

Apart from allowing maximal flexibility of use, this proposal would encourage lecturers to consider optimal ways of using materials in their institution, and would provide a means of identifying themselves with the material. (Students may feel that lecturers are not really "pulling their weight" if all the teaching material has been externally produced.)

The technical aspects of this proposal need clarifying, and it is probably not feasible at present. However, technology is changing so rapidly that within a few years we do not doubt that this option could become practicable. In the meantime, **other options could be considered, e.g. the distribution of hard copy "masters", which individual lecturers could amend before mimeographing; or the provision of central word processing facilities, so that lecturers could indicate their required amendments by post.**

6.9. Conclusions

The discussion of the SBC findings in chapter 4 suggested that there was a market for adapted OU material but that some subject areas were more likely to be successful than others because of the potential market. In the light of this and the preceding discussion which reveals a variety of possible approaches to the dissemination of material, we recommend that **(a) each adaptation should be treated individually with regard to publication (either in-house or by a commercial publisher); but that (b) all adaptations should conform to a uniform house style to achieve wide 'brand image' recognition.**

It is anticipated that the most likely method of dissemination will be in-house procedures for most adaptations. Only the most popular adaptations which can fit a text book format would be offered to commercial publishers. This differentiated approach would allow the project to take advantage of the flexibility and pedagogic advantages offered by in-house publication (i.e. short print-runs, regular updating via word processor, modular packaging, spiral binding, A4 size etc.), without losing the opportunity for commercial publication of the more marketable products.

Finally a word about price and royalties. One of the aims of this project has been to make available good quality open learning material to higher education at a reasonable price. Clearly, however, there are costs involved in doing that. The price of the finished material will need to cover:

- printing and distribution costs;
- overheads involved in coordinating the development of the project/liaison with OU etc;
- royalties of up to 10% of selling price to *both* the OU as originators of the material, and to those contributing to the adaptation which may include institutions, groups, or individuals involved in writing, etc.
- a negotiated return to any providers of 'up front' capital.

Finally, any adaptations which were published commercially would need to offer a commercial return to the publisher also.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter contains two sections. The first summarises our major proposals, and provides cross-references to the main body of the report; while the second section draws out some conclusions for the report as a whole. (Not all recommendations are repeated here; the major ones are indicated by bold type.)

7.1. Summary

Given the great potential that exists for using appropriate Open University texts in Polytechnics and similar institutions, along with the fact that in most cases adaptation will be necessary in order to develop this potential, this report makes the following points.

(p. 10) **As a standard part of CNAA's procedure for approving courses, course teams could be invited to state their policy towards Open Learning in general, and towards the use of Open University material in particular.**

(p. 13) ***All* open learning projects should familiarise themselves with OU methods and materials, even if in the end they decide to do things a different way.**

(p. 15) **In supporting Open Learning developments, especial attention should be given to high population courses, curricula which are taught in several institutions, and collaborative developments between institutions.**

(p. 16) **The CNAA should encourage and support subject teacher networks to discuss teaching initiatives in a range of subject areas.**

(p. 16) **CNAA subject committees should be invited to consider the following supportive actions:**

- **publicise relevant working groups in their area, and report their views on desirable developments**
- **allocate some small amount of resources to establish and develop such subject working group(s)**
- **establish a Working Party to comment on Open University courses in their area, and to identify any which show particular potential for adaptation.**

(p. 17) **Adapted or unadapted OU material could be used as a benchmark to facilitate credit transfer.**

(p. 18) **The focus for adapting Open University materials should be on text (not audio, video or CAL materials), and one criterion for the selection of text for adaptation should be the ease with which it can be made independent of non-text material.**

(p. 19) The CNAA should bring the various methods of using OU materials to the attention of individual institutions, and should consider jointly with the OU and OUEE (Open University Educational Enterprises) whether greater use of these methods can be encouraged by reducing or re-allocating costs, or by other means.

(p. 19) The OU should review and publicise its policy in the areas of bulk discount and photocopying licences, in order to encourage greater use of OU materials in other institution.

(p. 20) Attempts should continue to be made to collaborate with OU course teams, e.g. by placing Polytechnic academics on appropriate OU course teams, where this can be done to the benefit of both parties.

(p. 32) Adaptation of OU material should be carried out by ad hoc working groups, the membership of which should be decided using criteria which should include those listed on page 34.

(p. 35) Members of adaptation working groups should generally be freed of all other teaching commitments while they are working on the adaptation.

(p. 35) Justice must be seen to be done in balancing alternative modes of payment if more than one is in use.

(p. 36) All requests for approval concerning a particular adaptation should be sent *via* the Office of the Secretary of the Open University, who should be invited to specify a minimum list of "relevant academics" in connection with any particular adaptation. Copies of any particular adaptation request, along with a further invitation to specify a minimum list of "relevant academics", should be sent to the Dean of the relevant OU Faculty, and the Head of the relevant OU Discipline.

(p. 36) The system of faculty links should be extended.

(p. 37) The "centre" of the OU/Poly project should be extended in reduced form, as indicated in Section 5.5.

(p. 38) Third-party materials should generally be excluded from adaptation under this project.

(p. 38) Copyright in the adapted material should be held jointly between the Open University and a second party (not necessarily the CNAA).

(p. 38) Royalties should be distributed initially between The Open University on the one hand, who shall be responsible for its onward transmission to and distribution between OU bodies, including OUEE, OU faculties and the original author; and the Project "centre" on the other hand, who shall be responsible for its onward transmission to and distribution between all other bodies, including the adapters, the OU/Poly Project, and individual Polytechnics.

(p. 39) In order to minimise the risks of obsolescence, working groups should generally adhere to the guidelines indicated.

(p. 43) A single publisher (in-house or commercial) should be sought to take all materials emanating from the project; thereafter the question of house style should be left to negotiation with the publisher. However, until this is done, the project should prepare to produce and print the final texts in-house, while seeking sufficient venture capital to cover any necessary risk-taking. Distribution

should be contracted out on a non-exclusive commission-funded basis to an existing book distributor or other suitable party.

(p. 45) Other things being equal, Open University Educational Enterprises (OUEE) should be invited to publish materials from the project, but other academic publishers should be invited to tender along with OUEE.

(p. 48) Each adaptation should be treated individually with regard to publication (either in-house or by a commercial publisher); but all adaptations should conform to a uniform house style to achieve wide recognition.

(p. 52) The initiative represented by this project should be strongly encouraged at national level through pump-priming funding to establish the first series of adaptations.

7.2. Conclusions

This report points the way to an important educational initiative which could bring useful changes to teaching and learning in higher education. Assuming that the Open University continues to support the basic idea behind the project by making its material available for adaptation, the project can proceed and adaptations can commence. But unless the initiative is supported nationally, development will be slow and patchy because it will not be easy to recruit adapters and to retain the momentum and initiative which the OU/Poly project has established. This would be unfortunate because it would stunt a potentially exciting development with opportunities in the areas of credit transfer, subject teacher networks, and the further exploitation of proven high quality open learning material. The authors believe that OU material has an established pedigree in open learning for HE students; it is usable and useful. The opportunity for change should not be lost. Our final recommendation, therefore, is that THE INITIATIVE REPRESENTED BY THIS PROJECT SHOULD BE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED AT NATIONAL LEVEL THROUGH PUMP-PRIMING FUNDING TO ESTABLISH THE FIRST SERIES OF ADAPTATIONS.